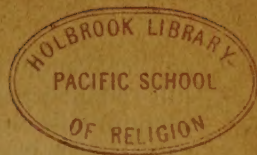


The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM



No. 95

AUGUST 20TH, 1941

DEAR MEMBER,

A significant study of the future of Germany appears in a recent issue of *Planning*, the broadsheet issued by P.E.P.¹ It lifts the question to the plane on which alone there is any hope of a solution, by making the basis of the discussion an objective consideration of the real forces at work in European civilisation. The approach to the problem in this statement is so valuable for getting the question into the right focus, that I shall try to give the gist of it, though it is difficult in any summary to do justice to what alone in itself is a very condensed presentation.

It begins with a reminder that the central issue of the war is the place of Germany in Europe. To modern Europe, Germany is the great trouble maker and destroyer of the peace; to modern Germany Europe is a collection of sham states, clinging to discredited economic theories and pretending to all sorts of democratic and social ideals which are only a cloak for narrow and corrupt ruling groups, who have thwarted the development of nations that have been kept by handicaps of geography and history from making a good start. There can be no hope of an enduring peace until this recurring conflict has been brought to an end by far-reaching changes both in Germany and in the rest of Europe. Germans must, once for all, be deprived of the remotest possibility of again attacking the liberties and lands of their neighbours, and Europeans must, once for all, put an end to the chronic muddle and dis-unity which keeps the Continent in unrest. Future world peace depends on finding a solution which the four great nations of Germany, Russia, Britain and America will be willing permanently to accept and actively to uphold. If such a solution exists, the discovery and proclamation of it will do more than anything else to hasten the end of the war.

Hitler has taken advantage of the failure to achieve European unity by trying to impose it by armed might. While Bismarck succeeded by this means in the lesser task of achieving German unity, Hitler has to reckon with the fact, that, leaving the U.S.S.R. out of account Germans do not number much more than twenty per cent. of the population of Europe. The German conquest of Europe has brought new forces into play. The clear-cut ideology and sense of mission with which the Nazis began are becoming confused and to some extent inhibited by the personal contact of millions of Nazis with millions of non-Nazis. The aggressive spirit of indicting an indefensible old order is giving place to a defensive attitude towards an even less defensible New Order. The Nazis are confronted in the occupied territories with an overwhelming series of reconstruction problems, and conditions in these countries provide an opportunity for the growth of new and dynamic popular movements which can be far more dangerous to Nazism than the forces which existed before the war.

It is superficial to look at the war only in terms of which side is winning battles. What is much more fundamental is the fact of the partial or total defeat of a number of forces which have shaped the modern world, such as national sovereignty, individualist business, Marxist socialism, institutional religion and the idea of neutrality. There is a

¹ Issued fortnightly or less frequently. Annual subscription £1. 16 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1.

political vacuum waiting to be filled, and it is the occupied countries and those which have still retained their independence on the borders of the inflated Reich that can fill this vacuum with vigorous new patterns consistent with the European tradition and inconsistent with Nazism. It is movements in the surrounding countries rather than any development within Germany that are likely to shape the future social patterns of the latter.

It is taken for granted in the statement that the defeat of Germany is the indispensable preliminary to the reconstruction of Europe. Little can be hoped for until the German people have learned once for all the futility of German militarism. Europe will cease to be Germany's battlefield, only after Germany herself has been made Europe's battlefield. By accepting Nazism the German people have determined that there should not be left in Germany any influential group capable of inspiring confidence within or without Germany nor any great institution which has not to be either destroyed or re-cast. This makes it doubtful whether there can be found in Germany an alternative government to Nazism.

When a nation is defeated and its government overthrown, there are four possibilities of carrying on the administration. Either recognised opposition leaders can be entrusted with the task, or a strong underground movement can throw up new revolutionary leaders, or an émigré government can be imported from abroad, or the victorious powers can assume control. There seems little hope of a solution along any of the first three lines, and it is assumed, therefore, that victory will be followed by a temporary assumption of governmental powers in Germany by the Allies. This is the more likely to be necessary, because the physical destruction of communications, lack of credit, foodstuffs and raw materials, and physical and psychological barriers to finding export markets, will be such that no German government will be able to cope with them without outside aid. The problems which will dominate the situation immediately following on the war will not be those of frontiers and sovereignties, but of food, coal and transport. They will be primarily not political but salvage and relief problems. The first necessity will be to deal with these problems for the whole of Europe by setting up a temporary administrative body, perhaps in the form of a Reconstruction Commission and by maintaining war-time international controls of raw materials and shipping.

If these realities are recognised there will, after the collapse of German resistance, be no need of an armistice, and still less for the farce of peace negotiations with a discredited and insincere stop-gap Government. The victorious Powers would assume temporary responsibility for dealing with the war problems of reconstruction. But the object of this temporary administration would simply be to set Europe on its feet. The immediate task would be the prompt re-victualling of Germany and the other European countries. This should be the first stage in a carefully planned and directed recreation of German institutions as an essential part of European reconstruction. The thought of revenge should be given no place.

In regard to a long-term policy, the success of any treatment of Germany depends on the reconciliation of two apparently contradictory propositions. The first is that the German people can never again be trusted not to abuse their strength by trampling on weaker neighbours. The second is that any settlement which discriminates against, and refuses to trust the German people contains the seeds of another German war. If this dilemma is to be resolved, two courses must be followed. In the first place, military and industrial power in Europe must be so reorganised as to assure that the effective control should be permanently in the hands of the majority of Europeans and not of the German minority which has usurped it. Secondly, each individual German must have the same opportunities and the same status as those of other Europeans. We must concern ourselves less with the claims of Germany and more with the claims of individual Germans.

If this policy is to be followed, it must be made clear that the first consideration in the peace is the future public safety and well-being of Europe. Great Britain has neither the

strength nor the temperament to act permanently as the policeman of the continent. The fundamental British interest is the same as that of Europeans as a whole. It is to establish a system which will bring enough social and economic security to make it generally worth upholding. The new order must be based, not on a permanent British hegemony, but on European co-operation and consent. While every necessary precaution must be taken to prevent Germany from once again creating havoc in Europe, it is wrong to assume that Germans are inherently disposed to embark on aggression. That they have shown such a disposition is due to historical causes. If Germany suffers a second defeat and experiences the horrors of war on its own soil, and if efficient world controls of common services and of raw materials are set up, there is no reason to suppose that the German people cannot in time be as thoroughly conditioned to European co-operation as Nazi Germany is conditioned for aggression.

This summary opens up, of course, large and debatable questions. Many important questions remain unanswered. But the approach to the problem seems to me entirely right. The aim of the discussion is a realistic understanding of the forces at work, and disinterestedness of purpose is seen to be the only hope of mastering them. These attitudes are not peculiar to Christianity but they are attitudes proper for Christians. At the same time the Christian knows that in ourselves we are quite insufficient for these things. Only a renewal of our life by divine grace can deliver us from the corrupting influence of power, and give us the courage, imagination, and disinterestedness that are necessary for the gigantic task of establishing a new order in the world.

Among other recent contributions to the study of the future international order are Professor E. H. Carr's *The Future of Nations*¹ in which he shows with great clearness that questions of peace and war have been revolutionised by the new use of economic power, that the crucial problem is how to reconcile the sentiment of nationality with the reality of economic interdependence, and that a solution can be found only in the recognition of different, but not incompatible, loyalties, existing side by side, so that people will belong to different groups for different purposes ; and Commander Stephen King-Hall's *Total Victory*,² in which he drives home with great force the truth that there is no real victory except one which changes the *minds* of the enemy, so that they willingly co-operate in maintaining the peace. The volume develops a strategy based on this premise. Another objective, balanced and thoughtful study of the question of Germany is Colonel T. H. Minshall's *What to do with Germany*,³ in which the crux of the problem is found in the domination of Germany by Prussia.

All these publications seem to me more helpful as aids to dealing with the problem of Germany than *Thus Spake Germany*,⁴ an anthology of German political thought with a preface by Lord Vansittart. I do not question the existence in Germany of a tradition fundamentally at variance with the liberal and humanitarian ideas of the West. The significance of this divergent tradition was brilliantly expounded in an address by Professor Ernst Troeltsch in 1922, reproduced by Professor Ernest Barker in his translation of Gierke's *Natural Law and the Theory of Society*.⁵ It is one of the fundamental factors with which we have to reckon in the reconstruction of Europe. Many people in this country, and still more in America, do not at all realise how deep it goes. Lord Vansittart is quite right to warn us against the disastrous consequences of ignoring it. But a book like *Thus Spake Germany* gets the picture out of perspective. A massing of quotations torn from their context does not help towards understanding ; and it is understanding that we need. In spite of the fundamental difference between our own national outlook and that of the Germans, I could even from my very limited reading cull from utterances of British and American public men and writers a collection of opinions that would make unpleasant reading. Or what might not an industrious student unearth from a study of French literature and speeches during the last 150 years ? We cannot be too much on our guard

¹ Kegan Paul, 1s.

² Faber & Faber, 7s. 6d.

³ Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.

⁴ Routledge, 10s. 6d.

⁵ Cambridge Press, 2 vols., 30s.

against the inevitable one-sidedness of such anthologies. A book like this exposes us to what M. Denis de Rougemont (C.N.-L. No. 91) warned us [is our greatest peril—the fatal illusion that evil has its seat only in our enemies.

THE LEADERSHIP OF YOUTH IN FRANCE

A national leadership training school, founded by a cavalry officer, has been in existence for nearly a year at Uriage near Grenoble. It conducts courses of three weeks each for the future leaders of France. Each class is attended by about 100 drawn from all classes, trades and professions. The average age is 25. The courses include physical exercises, the practice of handicrafts, manual labour, and lectures and study circles on the qualities required for the service of the nation. There is a daily period in which those attending the school have an opportunity of describing their experiences, ideals and difficulties. By these means those who are drawn from different spheres of life, such as officers, technicians, factory workers, and peasants are able to learn of each other's ways of life and problems. The dominant purpose of the school is to develop a social sense and a closer collaboration between different classes on a spiritual plane. Each evening there is a period for silent meditation. At the conclusion of the course, a pledge is taken in the following words : " For France, I promise to serve and command with all my heart and all my strength till death." More than 1,000 young men have passed through the school and gained through taking part in it a new hope for France.

THE NEXT ISSUES OF THE NEWS-LETTER

In order that I may have a holiday and some leisure for thought, four friends have generously undertaken to be responsible each for an issue of the News-Letter. The next four News-Letters will be written by Mrs. Stocks, the Principal of Westfield College, who has had a wide experience of social work both in the north and in London ; Mr. T. S. Eliot who rendered a similar service last year and whom you already know ; Sir Walter Moberly, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University and now the chairman of the University Grants Committee ; and Dr. George MacLeod, the founder and leader of the Iona Community.

Yours sincerely,

D. H. MacLeod

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